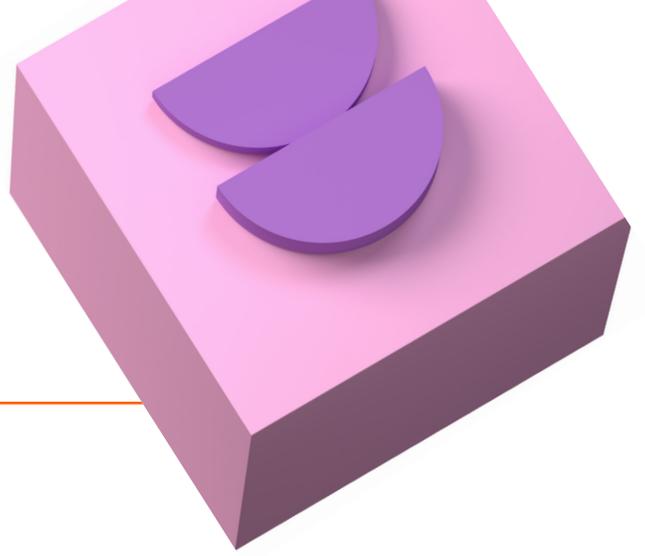




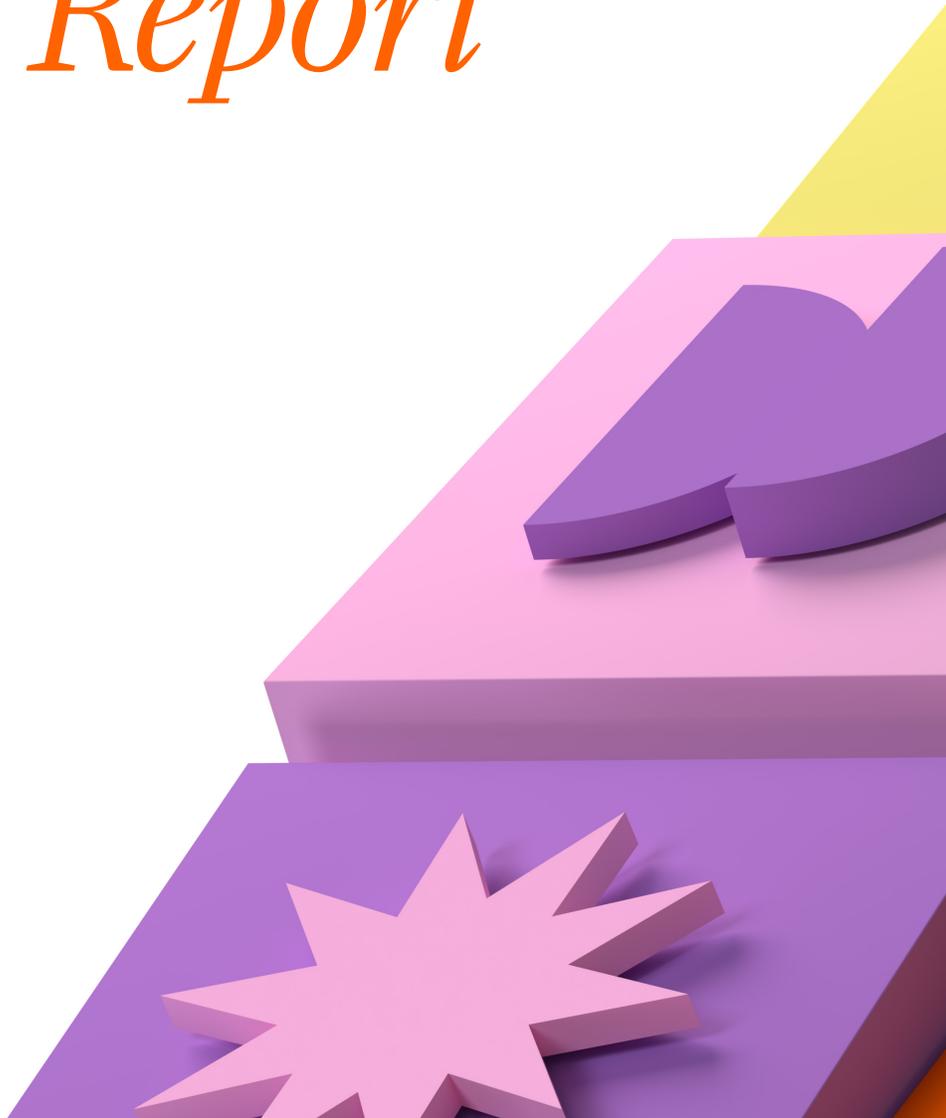
New Jersey  
Policy Institute



2025



*Annual Report*



## NEW JERSEY POLICY INSTITUTE

# Igniting Ideas. Together.

The New Jersey Policy Institute (NJPI) is a non-partisan, nonprofit public policy “do-tank” advancing free-market reforms that expand opportunity, empower families, and promote government transparency. Since its founding in 2024, NJPI has delivered on three pillars of reform:



*Education* **Freedom**

*Economic* **Opportunity**

*Energy* **Affordability**

## Board of Directors



### **Rosemary Becchi**, *President & Founder*

A tax attorney, public policy advocate, and nonprofit leader, Rosemary is the visionary behind NJPI. She previously founded Jersey 1st and has decades of experience in government and the private sector, including on Capitol Hill and in national tax policy. She launched NJPI to bring bold, reform-minded solutions to New Jersey's toughest challenges.



### **Andy Mulvihill**, *Chairman*

A successful entrepreneur, author, and school reform advocate, Andy Mulvihill is the owner of Crystal Springs Resort and author of the Penguin Random House book *Action Park: Fast Times, Wild Rides, and the Untold Story of America's Most Dangerous Amusement Park*, about the notorious amusement park his family founded and operated for 20 years. A former member and Vice President of the New Jersey State Board of Education, he has been a steadfast champion for parental rights, school choice, and educational excellence, bringing decades of governance and business experience to NJPI.



### **Kristen Cobo**

Kristen Cobo, LCSW, is a licensed clinical social worker specializing in the mental health and developmental needs of children and families. She has provided services across New Jersey public schools and major hospital systems and now owns a private therapy practice supporting the wellness of working women and mothers. A recognized leader in parental rights advocacy, Kristen was named one of Save Jersey's 2024 "Right Women to Watch." She played a central role in a landmark 2025 court decision affirming parents' constitutional right to speak out on behalf of their children after a defamation lawsuit was filed against her and other Roxbury parents. The lawsuit was dismissed with prejudice in October 2025. Kristen brings her clinical expertise and commitment to child well-being to the NJPI Board of Directors.



### **Marcela Crossman**

Marcela Crossman is a businesswoman, veteran, immigrant, and mother of two. She is Senior Vice President and Global Head of Middle Office at Linedata. Marcela also chairs the Board of Jersey 1st and is an active voice in state and local politics. She holds a B.S. in Computer Engineering from Rutgers University and served in the U.S. Marine Corps Reserves from 1996 to 2003.



### **Barbara DePonte**

Barbara DePonte is Director of Advocacy and Policy Initiatives at NYU, where she focuses on improving health outcomes for the disabled community, particularly in dental care. She previously served as Executive Director of Project Accessible Oral Health, uniting stakeholders across medical, dental, education, political, and public sectors to drive policy change, advance education, and raise awareness of this critical issue. A mother of two, Barbara also serves on the Jersey 1st Board of Directors.



### **Erica Jedynak**

Erica Jedynak is COO for yes. every kid. and a non-profit executive who has worked on causes across the country. She also serves on the board of the Institute for the American Worker and the New Jersey State Advisory Committee for the US Civil Rights Commission.



### **Elyssa Webber**

Elyssa Webber is a public policy professional recognized on SaveJersey.com’s “Right Women to Watch” list from 2020–2024. She previously led the LaunchPad program at State Policy Network, fostering collaboration among entrepreneurs and organizations, and worked at Americans for Prosperity, where she advanced state-level policy solutions rooted in community engagement.



### **George Boyan**

George is Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer of Unity Bank. He is also a former local school board candidate who ran to challenge the status quo and prioritize student outcomes. His financial acumen and passion for education make him a valuable asset to NJPI’s leadership.

## *Leadership Spotlight* \*



### **Wells Winegar, Executive Director**

Wells brings over 15 years of experience in New Jersey government and public affairs. He previously served in the executive branch, in legislative leadership, and in local government. As NJPI’s first Executive Director, he is responsible for executing the organization’s strategic vision, expanding partnerships, building coalitions, and representing NJPI in the media and policy arenas.





## Message from the Founder and President — *Rosemary Becchi*

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When we launched NJPI in 2024, we recognized a clear gap in the public debate: New Jersey needed a bold, credible, free-market, and out-of-the-box voice to advance policies that empower people—not bureaucracies. We didn't want to just reveal problems. We wanted to solve them. We wanted to ignite ideas together.

In 2025, we built that voice—mobilizing parents, influencing legislation, engaging in high-impact legal and policy work, and producing research that drives real change. NJPI emerged as a serious, solutions-oriented organization willing to take on entrenched interests and ask hard questions about whether New Jersey's institutions are truly serving students, families, and taxpayers.

Among our most consequential efforts this year was advancing a new education accountability initiative focused on transparency and fairness within organized labor. NJPI worked with aligned legal and policy organizations to examine the governance, financial practices, and political activity of the New Jersey Education Association. This work led to lawsuits being filed on behalf of teachers asserting their rights, as well as NJPI submitting formal complaints to the Internal Revenue Service and the New Jersey Election Law Enforcement Commission regarding compliance and disclosure issues. These actions reflect our belief that powerful institutions operating in the public sphere must be held to the same standards of accountability and transparency as the governments they seek to influence.

We also influenced the public conversation on energy policy with the launch of *Energy Matters*, a public affairs show on ONNJ. The program dives deep into New Jersey's energy landscape and offers practical, pro-consumer solutions, reinforcing NJPI's commitment to public education and accessible policy analysis.

To ensure lasting impact, we launched the NJPI Junior Fellowship Program, welcoming a cohort of emerging leaders across education, energy, and economic policy. These Fellows are already contributing original research, public commentary, and fresh perspectives—helping build the next generation of serious policy talent in New Jersey.

This is only the beginning. In the year ahead, NJPI will continue to grow its influence by expanding our team, strengthening affiliations, investing in people, and advancing ideas that put New Jersey on a stronger, more accountable path forward.





## **I invite you** *to invest in the future of New Jersey policy.*

The New Jersey Policy Institute is committed to advancing free-market reforms that expand opportunity, empower families, and promote government transparency. **Your support right now** will allow us to seize critical opportunities, respond quickly to emerging policy challenges, and expand our impact across the state.

*Your investment is tax-deductible and can be made by credit card, check, or stock donation.*

**Every dollar** directly fuels the research, advocacy, and outreach needed to launch meaningful reform in New Jersey.

\* **Make your gift today**  
*and help shape a freer, more prosperous future.*

[\*Donate Now\*](#)



Thank you for making this possible.

*Together, we're building something impactful and lasting.*

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**Rosemary Becchi**

*Founder & President*

# 2025 Highlights

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## *Shifting the Policy Landscape*

### Policy & Legal Milestones



**Landmark Amicus Brief:** Elevating public school choice as a remedy in the high-profile *Latino Action Network v. State of New Jersey* case.



**NJEA Accountability & Transparency:** Conducted in-depth analysis of the governance, financial practices, and political activity of the New Jersey Education Association. This work contributed to lawsuits filed on behalf of teachers asserting their rights and to NJPI submitting formal complaints to the Internal Revenue Service and the New Jersey Election Law Enforcement Commission.



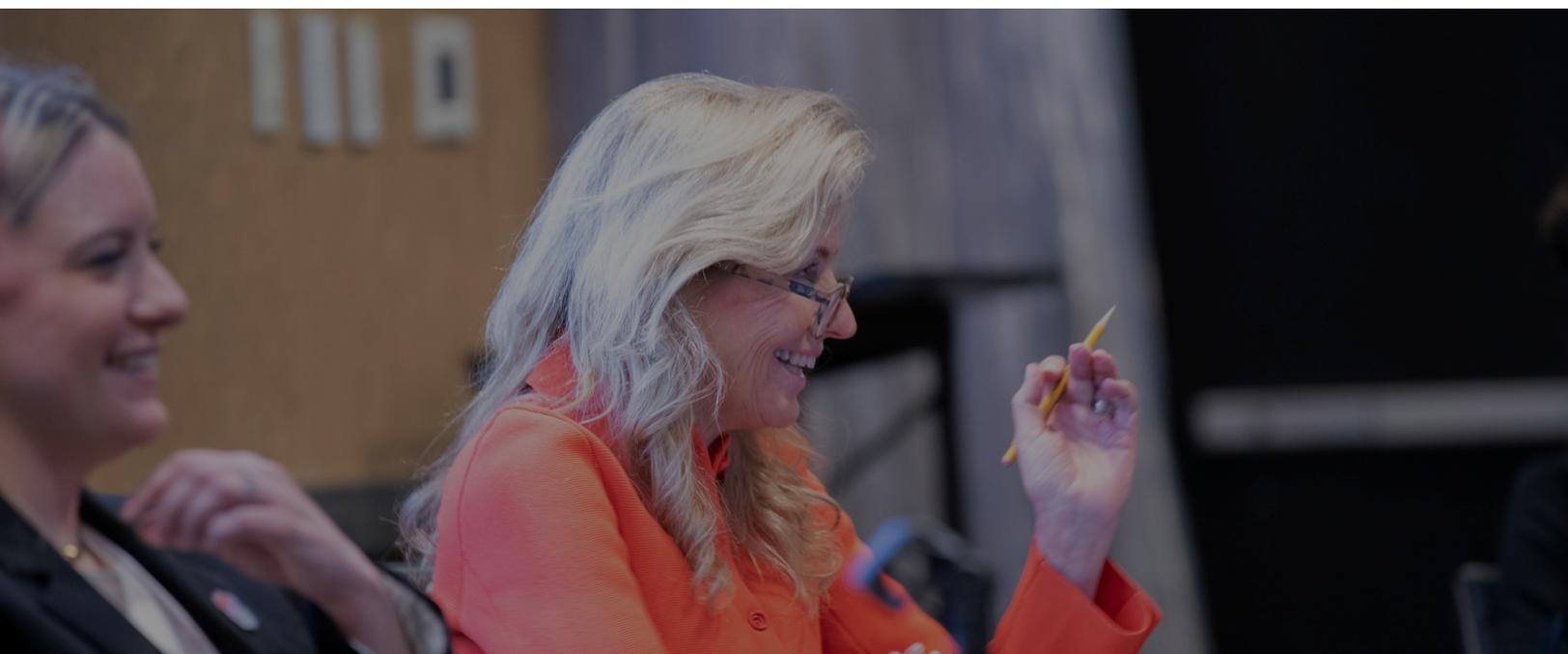
**Blocked Harmful Legislation:** Organized parent opposition to S1796, a proposed bill that would have imposed burdensome new regulations on homeschool families.



**Advanced Interdistrict Choice Reform:** Released new research and briefings urging the removal of enrollment caps and positioning school choice as a civil rights solution.



**School District Strategic Planning Report:** Published a statewide review of local school district strategic plans, highlighting gaps in goal clarity, accountability, and measurement—while advancing a performance-driven framework focused on literacy, numeracy, and student outcomes.



# Preparing for Lasting Success:

## *Launch of the NJPI Junior Fellowship Program*

As we rewrite New Jersey's story together, we're preparing for lasting success. We do that by identifying, convening, developing, and engaging the next generation to lead our state. In 2025, NJPI took a critical step in that mission. We proudly launched the **Junior Fellowship Program**, a new initiative designed to cultivate the next generation of public policy leaders in New Jersey, and build the talent pipeline.

The program builds on a strong foundation established by **Jersey 1st**, NJPI's affiliated 501(c)(4) partner, whose internship program has engaged dozens of motivated young people in the principles of free markets, individual liberty, and public service. Many applicants to the Junior Fellowship Program are expected to be alumni of this internship pipeline, making the program a natural next step for those ready to contribute at a higher level.

This synergy between Jersey 1st and NJPI creates a structured, mission-aligned path from civic engagement to serious policy research and advocacy.



## NJPI Junior Fellows

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### **Sean Barry - Energy**

Sean Barry is a Political Science major at NYU with minors in Economics and Business Studies. A former wealth management analyst and Jersey 1st intern, he focuses on energy affordability and competitiveness. As NJPI's 2025 Energy Policy Junior Fellow, Sean advances research on clean, reliable, and cost-effective solutions to lower energy costs for New Jersey families.



### **Aiden DeMarsey - Education**

Aiden DeMarsey is a Rutgers senior studying Public Policy and the youngest elected official in Evesham Township history, serving on his local Board of Education. As NJPI's Education Policy Junior Fellow, he brings hands-on governance experience to advance funding fairness and stronger student outcomes statewide.



### **Megan Whitman - Economy**

Megan Whitman is a senior at Georgetown University studying Government. A former Jersey 1st intern focused on tax reform, she now serves as NJPI's Economic Policy Junior Fellow, working on pro-growth policies to improve New Jersey's competitiveness and long-term fiscal health.

## NJPI Expands

- **Over \$300,000 Raised** in startup support from donors and foundations.
- **Built Core Staff Team**, including Executive Director, PR advisor, and legislative consultant.
- **Welcomed New Board Members**, including finance executive, George Boyan, and parental rights advocate, Kristen Cobo.
- **Launched the Junior Fellowship Program** to invest in future leaders in policy.



## Growing our *Public Presence*



**Shaping the Energy Conversation: Energy Matters** NJPI's bi-monthly public affairs show launched in June 2025 on ONNJ, bringing practical, pro-consumer solutions to complex energy debates. The program was renewed for Season 2 in 2026, reflecting strong engagement and continued demand for serious policy discussion.



**Convening Leaders for Academic Achievement** NJPI hosted a school board leadership event in Atlantic City, bringing together board members from across New Jersey to discuss governance best practices and strategies for improving academic achievement. The event reinforced NJPI's commitment to elevating student outcomes through stronger board-level accountability.



**Leading the Transition Conversation** As New Jersey welcomed a new governor, NJPI convened a bipartisan transition panel featuring former Democratic and Republican transition leaders. The discussion offered insights into governing priorities, institutional reform, and the policy opportunities facing the next administration.

**Taking the Mic: Earned Media** NJPI experts were featured in more than a dozen media placements, strengthening the organization's voice in statewide debates on education, energy, and economic policy.



## NJPI In the News



### Chalkbeat

*"In school segregation case, New Jersey opposes appeal as think tank urges court to consider remedy"*

NJPI was cited for its amicus brief in the Latino Action Network lawsuit, arguing for expanded school choice as a solution to segregation.



### NorthJersey.com

*"Appeals court to hear arguments in NJ school segregation suit"*

Highlighted NJPI's legal position that ZIP code-based school assignment contributes to segregation.



### POLITICO

*"NJEA hit with lawsuit for \$40M gov race spending"*

NJPI helped spotlight and support a lawsuit challenging the NJEA for funneling more than \$40 million in teacher dues into a failed gubernatorial campaign to ensure union accountability and financial transparency.



### NJ Education Report

*"New Report: Most NJ School Districts Lack Smart Student-Centered Strategic Plans"*

Highlights an NJPI report that finds most New Jersey school districts lack strategic, data-driven plans focused on measurable student outcomes, and calls for SMART planning to drive real academic improvement.

## Endorsements \*

"The New Jersey Policy Institute is helping to elevate the conversation around education and public policy in our state. At a time when students and families need serious, solutions-oriented leadership, NJPI is bringing research, accountability, and a focus on academic outcomes to the forefront. Its commitment to expanding opportunity, strengthening strategic planning, and ensuring that policies are grounded in evidence reflects the kind of thoughtful engagement New Jersey needs. I commend NJPI's work and its dedication to putting students first."

— Chris Cerf, Former New Jersey Commissioner of Education

"New Jersey works best when there are organizations willing to dig into the data, hold government accountable, and offer real solutions. The New Jersey Policy Institute is contributing meaningfully to that effort, particularly on issues like education and fiscal responsibility."

— Chris Christie, Former Governor of New Jersey

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# Bold Plans *for 2026*



*Because New Jersey's new story is just beginning.*

## Taking on Government

## POLICY OBJECTIVES

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- **Lift Interdistrict Choice Enrollment Caps**

We believe every New Jersey student deserves access to a high quality education regardless of their income or zip code. **NJPI intends to achieve the removal of statutory caps and prioritize interdistrict school access for underserved communities.** Our research will propose a *revenue-neutral funding model* to address cost concerns.

- **Strategic Planning Reform**

**NJPI will push for performance-driven strategic plans in school districts, focusing on measurable outcomes in literacy and math.** This includes promoting a model planning framework based on accountability and transparency.

- **Advance the Education Choice for Children Act (ECCA)**

NJPI will support New Jersey's participation in the federal Education Choice for Children Act, expanding access to donor-funded scholarship opportunities for eligible families. Through research, coalition-building, and direct engagement with policymakers, **NJPI will work to ensure the program broadens educational opportunity while maintaining fiscal responsibility and transparency.**

- **Pork Roll Report: Budget Transparency**

Taxpayers deserve to know. **NJPI will launch the Pork Roll Report**, a recurring publication spotlighting wasteful state spending and promoting smarter fiscal practices across agencies and programs.

- **Protect and Advance Educational Freedom**

**NJPI will support parental agency and vigilantly defend school choice, homeschooling, and local control against threats** by monitoring new legislation and regulation, organizing parent and community action, and testifying.

## Growing NJPI

### ORGANIZATIONAL & GROWTH OBJECTIVES

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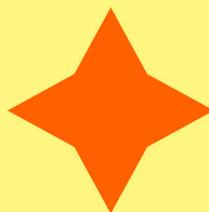
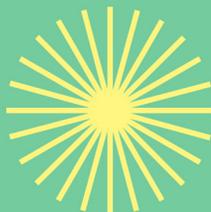
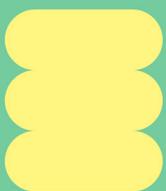
- **Hire a Full-Time Director of Outreach** to lead communications, stakeholder engagement, and event planning.
- **Add Two New Board Members** to expand governance and fundraising capacity.
- **Launch NJPI Advisory Board** with at least three founding members by year-end.
- **Raise \$500,000 in Programmatic Support**

## In the Public Eye

### MEDIA & PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT GOALS

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- **NJPI will convene elected officials, policy experts, and community leaders** to strengthen coalitions, align reform priorities, and build durable, cross-sector support for lasting change in education, energy, and economic policy.
- **Grow NJPI's Public Voice** with 20+ media placements, strategic op-eds, and media appearances.
- **Elevate Grassroots Voices** and advocate directly with lawmakers by hosting legislative days.
- **Grow Energy Matters' Influence** by expanding viewership through wider topic coverage that meets the public's interest and feedback.





## Wrapping Up \* ♦

In just one historic year, NJPI has become a respected force in New Jersey's policy landscape. We are reshaping debates, challenging the status quo, and opening new doors for students, families and communities across the state through our research, advocacy, media presence, and coalition-building.

As we boldly enter our second year, we do so with momentum, clarity of purpose, and an expanding network of partners committed to real change.

We invite you to join us. *Bring your idea to the table!*

## Partner with NJPI

Our bold work to re-write New Jersey's story is only possible with your donation. **We have a goal to raise \$100,000 before the end of the quarter.**

You can give via check, credit card (see QR code) or with stock gifts.



To learn more, visit:

[newjerseypolicyinstitute.org](https://www.newjerseypolicyinstitute.org)

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